

Talking Proud Archives --- Military

The 459th Twin Dragon Fighter squadron, Burma Banshees

We have done one in-depth story on the 80th Fighter Group Burma Banshees in the China-Burma-India Theater of WWII. We have also published a set of photos provided us by the son of one of the group's pilots. We have now received a historic set of photos from the daughter of a master sergeant in the group, MSgt. Herb Walker. This set is special, as it deals with the 459th Twin Dragons, who flew the P-38 Lightning. The other three squadrons flew the P-40 Warhawk. This will be mainly a gallery of the Walker Collection of photos, with some limited commentary. The P-38 was fighter most feared by Japanese pilots, and the 459th knocked down and destroyed its share of Japanese to earn that respect.

By Ed Marek, editor

<http://www.talkingproud.us/Military/459th/459thIntro.html>

June 1, 2008



80th Fighter Group (FG) "Burma Banshee" P-38 " Model photo presented by Aiken's Airplanes. You can see her unique "Twin Dragon" art. The 459th Fighter Squadron was the only one of the Banshee squadrons to fly the P-38, and it came to be known as the "Twin Dragons." This model is in honor of Capt. Walter Duke, a leading "Ace" of the 10th AAF, a 459th FS "Twin Dragon" lost in combat in June, 1944. His aircraft was "Miss V."

Earlier this year, Toni Pralle contacted me to say that her father was in the 459th Twin Dragon Fighter Squadron. The 459th Fighter Squadron (FS) was the first US squadron in India to receive the P-38H "Lightening," in September 1943. It was assigned to the 80th Fighter Group (FG), known as the Burma Banshees, which fought from bases in India and Burma in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Campaign of WWII in the Pacific. The other three squadrons in the group flew P-40s and P-47s.

Since then, Toni has sent us a batch of photos he found among his father's things. Toni is the son of Herbert Wayne Walker, Master Sergeant (MSgt.), US Army Air Force (USAAF).

Back on February 22, 2005 we published an article entitled, ["Burma Banshees, 'Angels on our Wings,' the call of death to the enemy."](#)

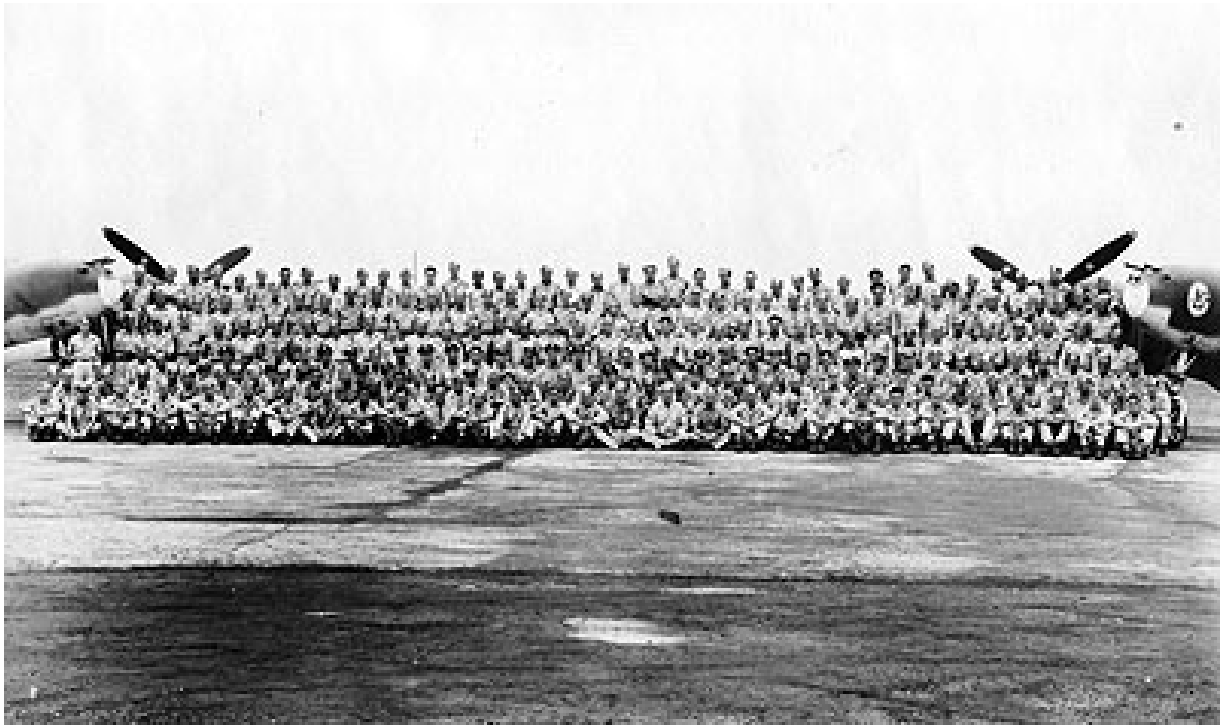
We're now proud to display photos sent to us by Toni Pralle. The 459th was a unique squadron in the Banshees, and this is a bit of history that we should not miss. I believe there are at least a few historic photos here.



The 459th FS was assigned to several air bases in northeastern India, now Bangladesh. It fought many a fight against the Japanese Air Force over southern Burma and eastern India.

By war's end, the 80th FG destroyed 149 enemy aircraft in the air and on the ground, of which over 100 were air-to-air victories. The squadron destroyed 123 enemy aircraft in its first 58 combat days. Six of the squadron's pilots were aces.

All photos in this report are courtesy of the Pralle family of Iowa, from those kept by its father, unless otherwise indicated. Among the most historic photos the family provided is this squadron group shot.



I do not know what year it was taken. I am going to break the photo up into eight sections, so perhaps some readers can recognize a family member or friend. If they do so, I hope they notify me. I would like to identify them all if I can.

I have also made this a B&W photo hoping for better clarity. I am going to move from left to right. There will be some overlap to make sure I get everyone in there. As I conducted my research of the squadron, I ran across identified photos of individuals, mostly pilots. I have tried to match them to these photos but must admit I am on shaky ground. Help if you can.

My first conclusion is that the enlisted guys are wearing flight caps while the pilots are wearing the "crush caps." The crush cap was the Visor Cap, or Service Cap, deliberately worked on by the pilots much as we do baseball caps these days. The best "worked over" of them were known as the "50 mission crush cap," a sign of a guy who has been around the block a few times. A web site known as [acmedepot.com](#) has said this:

"Nothing made an aviator look more seasoned than when sporting a floppy, crumpled cap riding at a jaunty angle atop his head."



Front row, second from the left with crush cap, possibly Lt. Burdett Goodrich, ace credited with 5.5 air victories. Killed in action.



Fourth row, second from left with his crush cap cocked back a bit, sporting a mustache, resembles Major James Fielder. He has written an excellent book on the 459th FS, entitled, A history of the 459th Fighter Squadron: The Twin Dragons, CBI, 1943-1945, which can be ordered through the Burma Banshee web site. This web site has some wonderful photography of its own.



Second row, second from the right, Francis Salvatore Nudi, Pittsburgh.



Third row, third pilot from the left, sitting next to an enlisted man, looking straight at us, could be Capt. Wally Duke, the top ace in the squadron, ten confirmed kills in the air and eight on the ground. Killed in action.



Third row, fourth from the right, crush cap cocked up and back, possibly Capt. Henry Mahler, an ace with three air victories and two-and-a-half on the ground. Second row down from the top, first on the right, MSgt. Herbert W. Walker.



Third row, fourth from the right, looking straight at you, a wild chance this is Capt. Hampton Boggs, number two ace in the squadron.





This last shot is very overlapped with the previous one, I just had to get that Twin Dragon nose in there with the squadron patch. Plus, of course, third row, second from the right, flight cap cocked, sunglasses on, he had to be shown in his full splendor yet again.

Talking Proud Archives --- Military

The 459th Twin Dragon Fighter squadron, Burma Banshees

The P-38 Aircraft



Just a few bits of history before proceeding. My article "Burma Banshees, 'Angels on our Wings,' the call of death to the enemy" has extensive history in it, but I need to add a few things as we focus on the 459th squadron.



This map, courtesy of *National Geographic*, highlights the situation in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The brownish-red areas are held by the Japanese.

Japan invaded and took the British colony of Burma in 1942. By September 1943, the American General Joseph Stilwell, leading Chinese troops, led a ground offensive into Burma. The British created a South East Asia Command in November 1943 designed to protect India, led by Lord Mountbatten. By year's end, the British and Americans began building the Ledo Road to connect with the Burma Road above where the Japanese held the Burma Road and open a route into China.

The Japanese in February 1944 began to attack the Arakan coast of the Bay of Bengal in far western Burma and were defeated. They did this to protect their left flank while they invaded India a bit farther north. Furthermore, the Arakan coast was the shortest route from India to Rangoon for the Allies.

In March 1944 the Japanese led an offensive against Imphal and then Kohima in northeast India (we'll show their locations on a map in a moment). That invasion was defeated, crippling the Japanese on all fronts in the area.

The Allies then focused on three fronts in Burma: north, central and south during 1944-45. Rangoon was taken back in May 1945 and the Japanese began to withdraw in July, during which time the Allies and monsoon weather resulted in near destruction of the Japanese Army in Burma. The war ended in September 1945. At a top level, the only ground forces provided by the US and Britain were commandos along with British Commonwealth forces, mainly from India. The British and US provided the air power and transport support Over the Hump to China.

In June 1943, the 80th Fighter Group (FG) with three squadrons of P-40s began deploying to the theater, known as the China-Burma-India Theater, the CBI. The 88th, 89th and 90th FSs arrived at Karachi in June 1943. The 80th Group said it was ready to fight in September 1943 and that's just what it did. The timing was good, as General Stilwell began his offensive into Burma at about this time.

As early as 1938, the famous aircraft designer Clarence "Kelly" Johnson was working on a radical new design for a fighter. She would have enormous power with two engines vice one, she would have extensive armament that did not have to fire through the propeller, she would use a tricycle landing gear, she would fly at 400 mph, and she would have great range, especially with extended and droppable fuel tanks. The aircraft was built secretly and flew its maiden flight in 1939. The P-38, of course, would quickly find its way to Europe. They began arriving in the Pacific in December 1942, but only three squadrons would get them, and only one of those squadrons would be dedicated to the CBI.

The 459th FS was constituted in August 2, 1943 to fly the P-38 in the CBI. It activated on September 1, 1943. Three officers were tasked to form it up: First Lieutenant Hampton E. Boggs, Capt. Verl D. Luehring and 1st Lt. William G. Broadfoot, all P-40 pilots. As best as I can tell, all three came from the 80th FG Burma Banshees.



Major Fouts initially took command, but was replaced by Capt. Luehring, shown in this photo, in March 1944. He's admiring his squadron's kills in this photo.

Their mission was straight-forward:

"Destroy enemy aircraft in the air or on the ground."

This is the kind of mission fliers like. Short and sweet.

John Stanaway, in his book *P-38 Lightning Aces of the Pacific and CBI*, wrote this:

"At war's end, Japanese veterans gave grudging tribute to the P-38 as their most formidable foe ... The top American aces of the war flew the aircraft with both confidence and a certain affection which sometimes approached fanatical devotion."

The Germans found the P-38 to be a formidable foe as well, nicknaming it the Forktailed Devil.

Karachi hosted the delivery of a great deal of equipment, especially aircraft, from the US, and pilots did a lot of flight training from there before heading to their combat bases. I suspect the P-38 aircraft initially were delivered to Karachi, India, where they would go through some final assembly, tweaking and checkouts. Flight training also occurred there.

While in India, the squadron came under the command of the RAF No. 224 Group, RAF Third Tactical Air Force, formed in December 1943, known as Tactical Air Force (Burma). Its main area of operation was the Arakan Front, in southwestern Burma along the Bay of Bengal, which we'll discuss in a moment. The 224 Group was commanded by RAF Air Commodore Alexander Gray, and his deputy was US Brigadier General John P. McConnell, who ultimately became a Chief of Staff of the USAF.

The other element of the Third Tactical Air Force, RAF No. 221 Group, concentrated on defense of Imphal and Kohima to the north.



This map shows where the Japanese were in Burma since 1942, it highlights the locations of Imphal and Kohima, India, two high priority Japanese targets, and it reflects the air base moves made by the 459th.

Searching for WWII photos of the airfields from which the 459th operated has been nearly futile. I'll give you the best I have been able to find.



This is Kurmitola Airfield in 1971, at the time in East Pakistan, at this moment being bombed by the Indian Air Force. Presented by the Indian Air Force.

Following set up and training at Karachi, the squadron moved to Kurmitola on November 5, 1943, near Dacca. This was the 459th's first operational base.



This video grab shows the 459th using a crashed C-46 at an undisclosed airfield being employed as its control center.

The squadron flew its first combat mission from here on November 14, 1943. At this point in history, fears were rising that India would be invaded and the newly formed combined command under Mountbatten aimed to stop that. Just looking at the map, Kurmitola presented the 459th with a central location from which they could fly against the enemy along much of the breadth of the Indian-Burma border. That said, take note of how the squadron moved south over time.

By December they were escorting B-24 heavy bombing runs over Burma. In January they were escorting B-25s medium bomber runs, attacking railways, towns, boats, buildings and steamers, strafing oil plant and storage tanks, anti-aircraft positions, bivouac areas, warehouses, airfields, bridges, pipelines, gasoline plants and they just kept on going, all the while shooting down enemy aircraft threatening them or the aircraft they escorted.

Kurmitola Airfield was a fairly newly constructed field in 1942, as many were, hacked out of the jungles near Dacca. The 490th Bombardment Squadron B-25s used it, as did other Allied B-25 outfits, and they were constantly harassed by Japanese fighters. It ended up becoming a major base for bombers and "Over the Hump" transports. At the time, it had a single runway. In the above 1971 photo, it still does. In the gee whiz column, we spotted an article where USMC F/A-18 Hornets stopped at Kurmitola, Bangladesh in October 2007. Lt. Adrian Rankine-Galloway described the field this way:

"Morning mist rose above a jungle-bound airfield in Bangladesh October 25..."

The squadron would then move to Chittagong Airfield, India on March 4, 1944. Pacific Wrecks Data Base has a photo of a 459th FS parked at Chittagong Airfield. This is it.

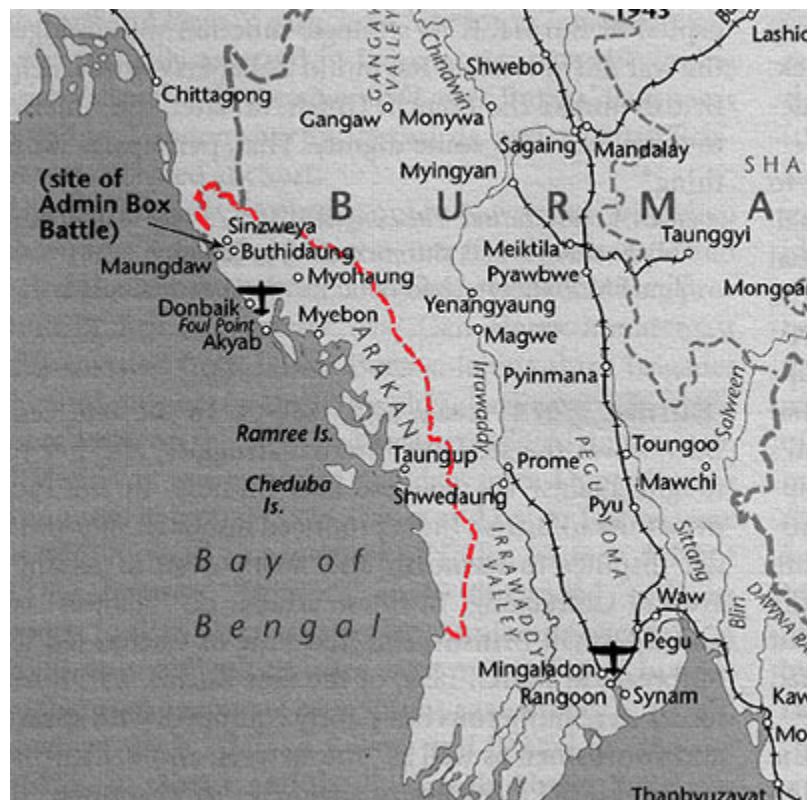


It looks like the aircraft is parked on grass. Pacific Wrecks reported that this aircraft was piloted by "Boggs." According to MSgt. Walker's 459th Roster, that would be the late Hampton E. Boggs, one of the three who helped form the 459th.

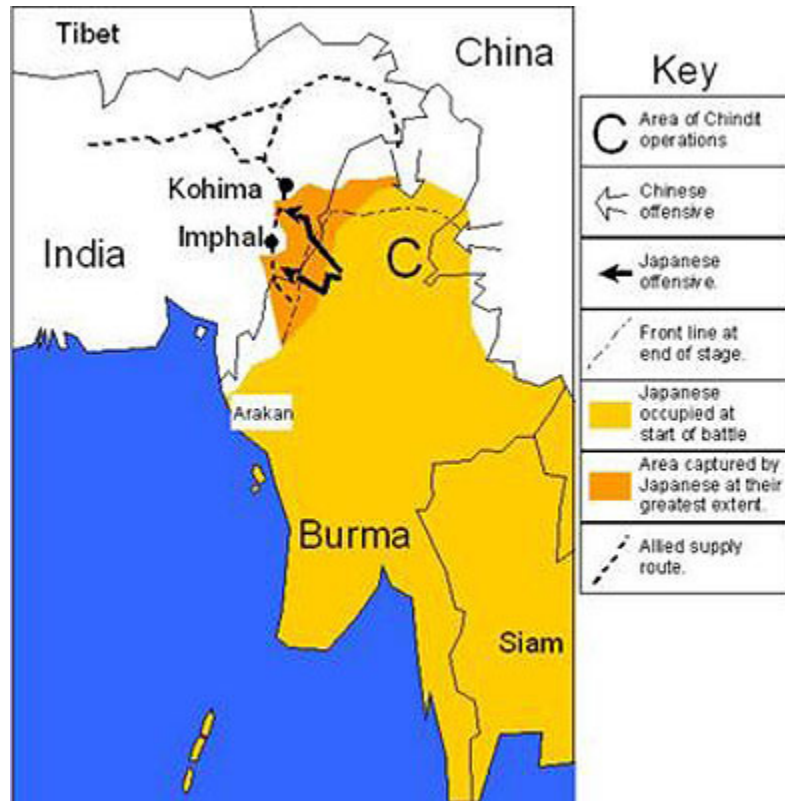
Hampton Boggs with his P-38, Melba Lou IV, the number two ace in the squadron with nine kills. Photo credit: Len Boyd. Extracted from the book, P-38 Lightning Aces of the Pacific and CBI (Osprey Aircraft of the Aces No 14), by John Stanaway, Tom Tullis.



Capt. Boggs would end up an Ace, credited with nine kills, though we have seen a couple lists that said he had only six. I do know that he killed three enemy on a single mission on March 25, 1944, for which he received the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC). On this mission, he was a flight leader, shot down an aircraft in the air, it in turn crashed and destroyed one on the ground, and then he destroyed another one on the ground.



Moving to Chittagong in March 1944 was, I think, in response to the Japanese invasion of India, attacks against Imphal and Kolima, and importantly, attacks into the Arakan area of western Burma on the Bay of Bengal. The Japanese attacked in to the Arakan, outlined in red, in order to clear their left flank for the main thrust through western Burma to Imphal.



Here is a view of that strategy, presented by answers.com.



Greg Boyington has done some virtual paintings he calls "skins" and did this one of 459th P-38s over Chittagong in 1944. Chittagong was on the Bay of Bengal and was much closer to Burma than Kurmitola. This made it ideal for attacks against the Arakan area.

On February 1, 1945, the squadron was moved to Rumkha, which is close to a well known place

named Cox's Bazar, and even closer to the Arakan. This move supported the push into Burma which culminated in retaking Rangoon in May and the ultimate defeat of the Japanese in Burma.



The decision to press to Rangoon was made in February 1945. This was huge decision, and many units began moving to the south to support this operation. As you can see, the shortest distance to Rangoon was through the Arakan. The red dot marks the approximate location of the 459th at Rumkha.

Transports would fly troops, including paratroopers, and supplies to the south, many staging from Chittagong. By the end of April 1945, the Allies were on the outskirts of Rangoon and aircraft, including some from the 459th, were actually flying from bases in the Arakan. The 224 Group on May 1, 1945 dropped the 26 Indian Division to the south of Rangoon from the base at Arakan, and no doubt had fighter escort and support. Rangoon fell on May 3, 1945. This meant the war against the Japanese in Burma was effectively concluded.

Once Rangoon was taken, it appears the squadron was moved west, out of harms way, to Dudhkundi where it remained from May 11 through October 8, 1945. During this period, with Rangoon taken, a major effort was mounted to fly supplies Over the Hump at increased rates, and we suspect the 459th provided escort duties. Dudhkundi had served as an important bomber base and became the first home of the newly XX Bomber Command which would become the 20th AF.

As an aside, Dudhkundi was one of several airfields in the flatlands near Calcutta. These bases were used by bombers in Operation Matterhorn, where US bombers, mainly the B-29, would fly from India to bases in China, top off fuel, and then go on to bomb targets in Japan's Home Islands. Those flights began in June 1944 and represented the first concentrated bombing of Japan's Home Islands and also included massive bombing of Japanese bases in China. This was a difficult, cumbersome and inefficient operation, but a necessary one because it was the only way the B-29s at the time could get to the Home Islands. Once the Marines took Saipan and Tinian, the B-29s started flying round-robin directly to and from the Home Islands. Once the Marines took Iwo

Jima, they did so with fighter escorts to and fro, and they had a great emergency landing base.

The atomic bombs were dropped in August from Tinian and the war ended in September 1945.

The men then went to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey in November 1945 where the squadron was inactivated, along with many others.

With all that as background, let's now dive into some of MSgt. Herb Walker's photography of his days with the 459th FS Twin Dragons in India. Where I feel gutsy, I will make a stab at identifying locations, hoping someone will either validate my guesses or chew me out and correct me.

The P-38 was the first fighter to top 400 mph flying level. It had a near speed-of-sound dive and a bubble canopy. She could handle a variety of missions. It had long range, up to 2,000 miles, making her American's first long range fighter and her first high altitude fighter.



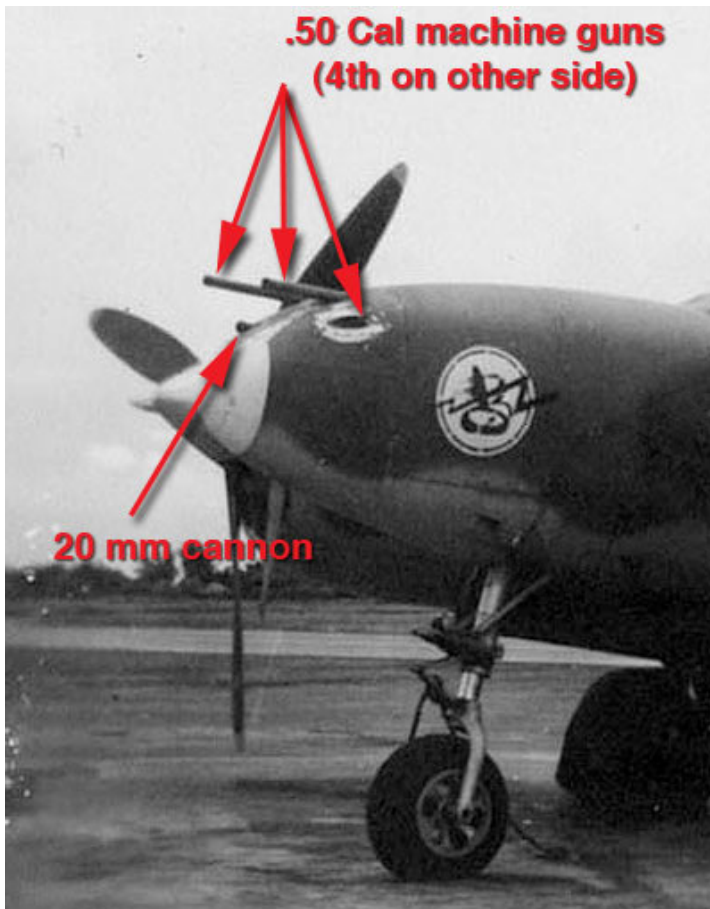
459th FS "Twin Dragon" P-38H "Lightning." I will guess this photo was taken at Kurmitola. I have seen a photo of a CAT (CIA) C-199 transport parked at Kurmitola and the ramp looks the same, though that is flimsy evidence to be sure. The P-38H was manufactured by Lockheed. She had two 1425 hp Allison V-1710-89/91 12-cylinder V12 engines, automatic oil radiator flaps to solve engine overheating problems and jacked up her power above 25,000 ft. from 1150 to 1240 hp, each engine.



She carried a fixed forward-firing 20mm cannon in the nose, 150 rounds, four 0.50 in. Browning MG53-2 fixed forward-firing machine guns in the nose, 500 rounds each.



Placed in the nose, these guns and cannon fired in parallel, eliminating the need to synchronize their firing with the propellers. In short, she had immense fire power. That the guns did not have to fire through propellers gave it a major hitting advantage against enemy aircraft.



She could handle 3,200 lbs. of bombs (we have seen the figures 2,000 lbs and 4,000 lbs. as well) under two hardpoints under the inner wings. She also had B-33 turbosuperchargers that increased her high altitude performance. Her max speed was 401.35 mph or 349 knots at 25,000 ft., and could operate up to 39,000 ft. altitude. Her range without droppable fuel tanks was 300 miles. I'll talk more about range a bit later.



There she is, aloft. This is P-38 "San Joaquin Siren" flown by Bill Behrs. Below his name we count four, perhaps five Japanese flags denoting kills.



We have a few shots of 459th FS nose art.

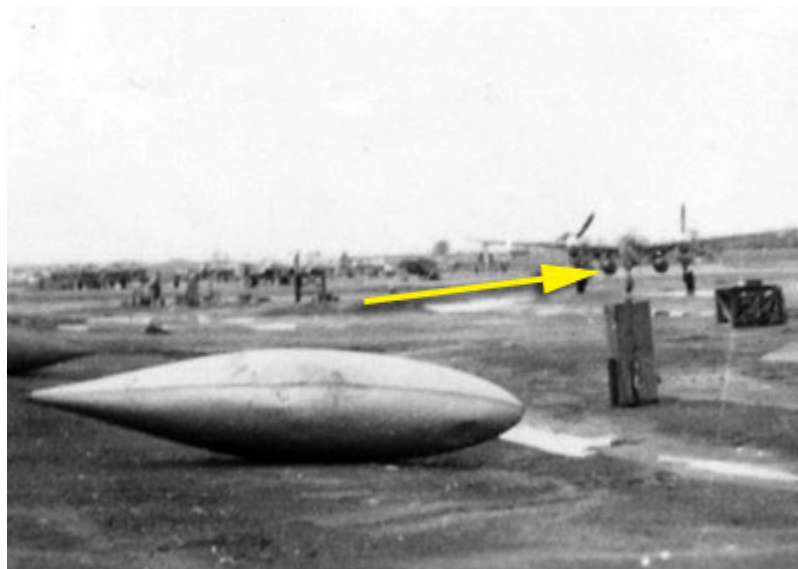
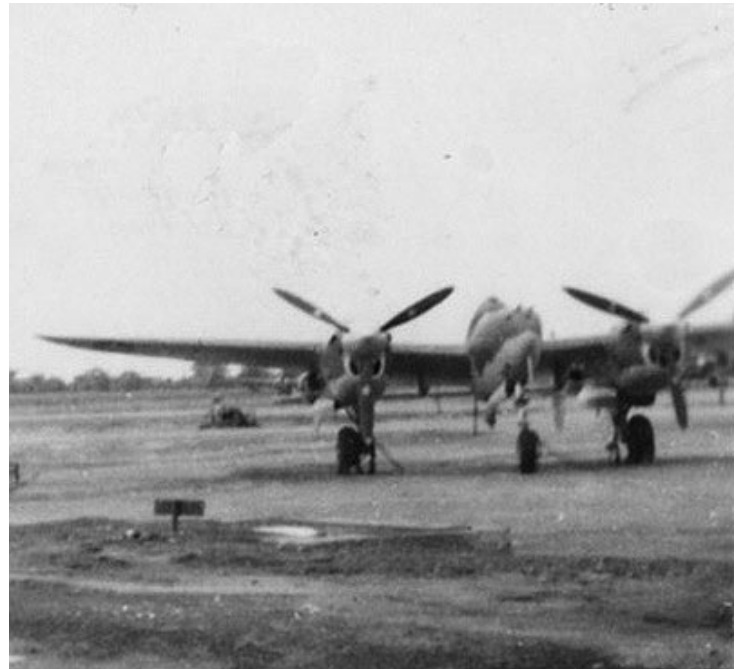


Guerrilla in the Clouds



Fire From the Clouds (looks like he's got a bit of battle damage, lower right)

Some aircraft on the ramp.



This latter photo is interesting. I cropped them out, but there were a line of fuel tanks on the ground to the left of the one shown here in the foreground. In looking at the P-38 to right of center, I've placed a yellow arrow pointing to one of those mounted on the wing; you can see

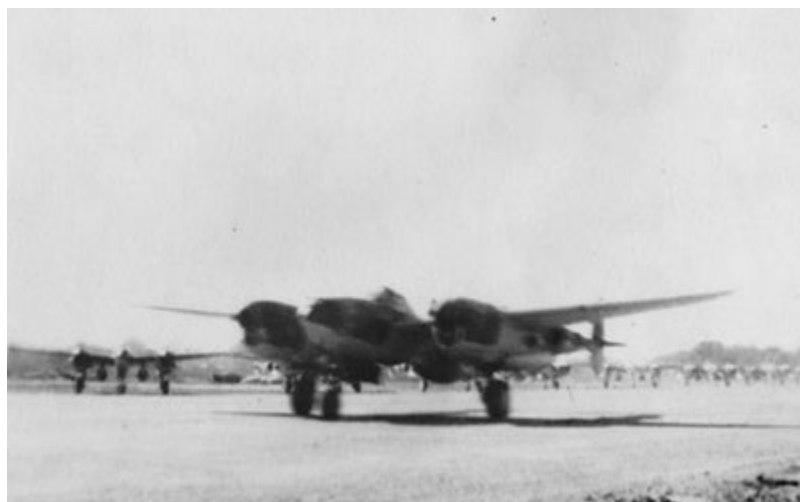
another mounted on the other wing. The P-38 used droppable fuel tanks especially for long-range escort missions, such as those that went "Over the Hump" to China or deep into Burma. Most photos I have seen from the Walker Collection has them wearing their droppable tanks. I have seen figures ranging from 1,500 - 1,600 mile ranges for the fighter with these fuel tanks. I have seen 300 mile ranges without them. I have also seen references to flying "slick" P-38s, essentially empty, carrying fuel tanks that enabled 2,600 mile range, probably used for aircraft deliveries.

All that said, data I have found says the aircraft could carry two 75, 150 or 165 US gallon fuel tanks. I have seen people using 316 gallon P-38 fuel tanks to build racing cars. Net score here is I do not know what size tanks these are.



This is most certainly an airfield with P-38s parked. I am not sure what field this is, though if on a quiz show, I would guess Chittagong since the aircraft are parked on grass. Here are two zoomers.

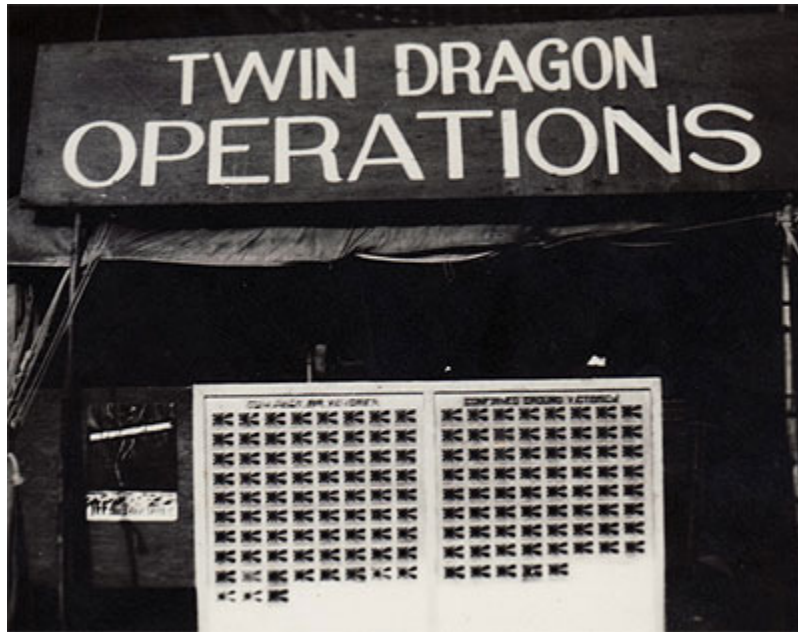




This is a nice shot. You see two P-38s with extended fuel tanks taxiing, and a whole bunch of them parked in the background.



Here's a gaggle of them parked side-by-side. In this photo, the aircraft look silver. At some point they were painted. If we knew when, we could identify this field.



The 459th FS Operations Center. The board shows Confirmed Air Victories on the left, Confirmed Ground Victories on the right. As of the date of this photo, the squadron had scored 75 air victories and 69 ground victories.



My guess here is that MSgt. Walker was the non-commissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) of communication, tech supply, maintenance and sheet metal.

Talking Proud Archives --- Military

The 459th Twin Dragon Fighter squadron, Burma Banshees

The Men



We already introduced you to the 459th FS's commander, Major (promoted to Lt. Colonel) Verl Luehring. He was from Kansas. He enlisted in the Army in March 1941.

In his book, *P-38 Lightning Aces of the Pacific and CBI*, John Stanaway wrote this:

"The first important mission of this period (first half 1944) was led by the new squadron CO, Lt. Col. Verl Luehring on 11 March (1944), and saw a dozen Lightnings make a perfectly-timed assault on Aungban and Heho airstrips just as a number of Japanese fighters were taking off to intercept them.



"Luehring drew first blood when he shot down an 'Oscar' (Japanese Mitsubishi 'Zero') during his opening pass, whilst future aces Capt. Maxwell Glenn and Willard Webb each accounted for a pair apiece. Eventual ranking ace of the 459th, Lt. Walter Duke got two Oscars as well, plus a third as a probable."

Luehring would finish the war with a total of three kills, one each as a captain, major and lieutenant colonel. He would rise to the rank of colonel and in April 1954 take command of the 21st Fighter-Bomber Group then at George AFB, California.



Lt., then Captain Walter F. Duke scored ten kills. That said, In his book, *P-38 Lightning Aces of the Pacific and CBI*, John Stanaway noted that Capt. Hampton Boggs went to Japanese air bases after the war and talked to Japanese intelligence officers. They knew of Duke, and said before he got shot down, he killed three more Zeroes, which would give him 13 air victories.

Duke was shot down over Burma on June 6, 1944. Assigned to the Twin Dragon squadron, the 459th of the Burma Banshees, he became known as "The Dragon with the sharpest claws."



On the day he was shot down, he was returning from his mission over Burma to the base at Chittagong. As he was flying "home," he realized he did not have his wingman with him. So he went back to the area to look for him. In so doing, he was jumped by a formidable force of Japanese fighters, which intelligence later determined were Japanese KI-43 Oscars. He had to fight against them all alone. He was never heard from again, and was listed as MIA. However, he was reported to have shot down three enemy aircraft during the fight before himself going down. He was not credited with these as no one saw the event and there was no gun camera footage.

I received a note from [Mitch Thompson](#) of Oxford, Iowa on July 18, 2012 that said:

"My father in law Dewey Sowder was a pilot in the 459th from '43 to November of '44 ... Dewey was a warrant officer and when he got out, a first lieutenant. Flew 110 missions. He served as someone's wing man and in spite of this he had 1 1/2 kills. I don't know who he was a wing man for, wondered if you might have a lead on that information. He did tell me once the story of Capt. Dukes death and he was on the mission sent out to look for him. Dewey was transferred out to the 33rd fighter group "The Gorillas" in November of 1944. I believe he was in line for the executive

officer of this outfit before he got out in May of '45. I know nothing of the 33rd and was hoping to get a line that outfit as well."



This is 1st Lt Bill Lyon. On May 25, 1944, he was an element leader of a second flight conducting a fighter sweep of Kangaung, having launched from Chittagang. According to Duke and 2nd Lt John Bumger, they dove through 7/10 overcast over the target from about 10,000 ft. On observing no targets on the field, Duke pulled up at about 4,000 ft and made no attack. Bumger said Lyon steepened his dive perhaps thinking he had a target in sight. Bumger tried to stay with him but the dive got steeper and steeper, almost to vertical. Bumger saw his airspeed at 500 mph at 5,000 ft and pulled up to about 2,000 ft. When Duke looked back to see if his flight was together he observed a large column of black smoke on the south end of the target, Duke reported that Lyon was missing from the formation. Bumger reported a similar observation.

I have a very nice set of photos of men assigned to the 459th in the CBI, but most are not identified. I will do my best to identify those I can, and ask that readers lend a hand if they recognize one of these guys. I'm guessing these are all maintenance guys, no nonsense fix 'em up, patch 'em up, and fly 'em kinds of men.



Once again, I'll break this up to get a closer look at these guys. The next two are close-up views of this photo.







Master Sergeant (MSgt) Herbert Wayne Walker



The troops are cooking chow here. That's MSgt. Walker in the middle.



This is a great photo. It looks like two men peering out of their foxholes, which seem to have wooden tops at the least. I am going to guess that this photo was taken at Chittagong. I have seen a report prepared in New Zealand that said that their pilots had moved to Chittagong where they lived in tents "tucked away in the jungle along the airstrips."

In any event, that's Walker on the right. I'm going to zoom in on both these guys in the next two photos.



I have read several accounts that the Chittagong airfields were bombed frequently by the Japanese, so these holes look like a good idea if indeed they're at Chittagong.

The 459th Twin Dragon Fighter squadron, Burma Banshees

The Men (continued)



Bomb away!



Into squadron operations.



At the barracks with an Indian who probably kept the place straightened and clean and helped the men with their uniforms, etc. Often known as a "houseboy" in those days.



The chaplain has always played a major role in the lives of men at war. This is interesting if compared to what chaplains had when they were on the front lines. This looks like a pretty good set-up.



Looks like these guys are building something.



Don't know his name, but he almost looks like one might imagine to be a young Robert Redford! Even a Bill Clinton.



I like this photo because it gives a good look at some living quarters. I want to zoom in to show you the man better, and perhaps the inside of the barracks.



You can see mosquito netting surrounding the bunks, and it looks like they have it over the portals as well, rolled up and brought down at night.



Another look at living quarters, with three guys sitting on the "porch." A close-up on them follows.



I blew this up a bit, but still not a bad look.



The 459th Twin Dragon Fighter squadron, Burma Banshees

The Men (continued yet again)



Well, this is an example of the nose art of the day. My guess is this is a panel from the front side of an aircraft, just aft of the guns. It most likely is off the nose of a P-38 that was not flying any more, for whatever reason. It's located in front of some tents. I searched high and low to try to find this nose on the web but so far no joy.



It looks like he's photographing a bomb crater.



Good lookin' bunch of dudes.



This is a technical sergeant. In the photo above this one, he is in the back row, second from the left, hat bent upwards.



That's MSgt. Herb Walker seated, and it looks like there are three Indian military guards posing with him. They no doubt provided security for the air base.



Again, MSgt. Herb Walker to the left, and it appears a British soldier or officer on the right. I believe this to be at Kurmitola Airfield as I have seen [490th BS photos](#) of their quarters there and they look exactly the same as in this photo.

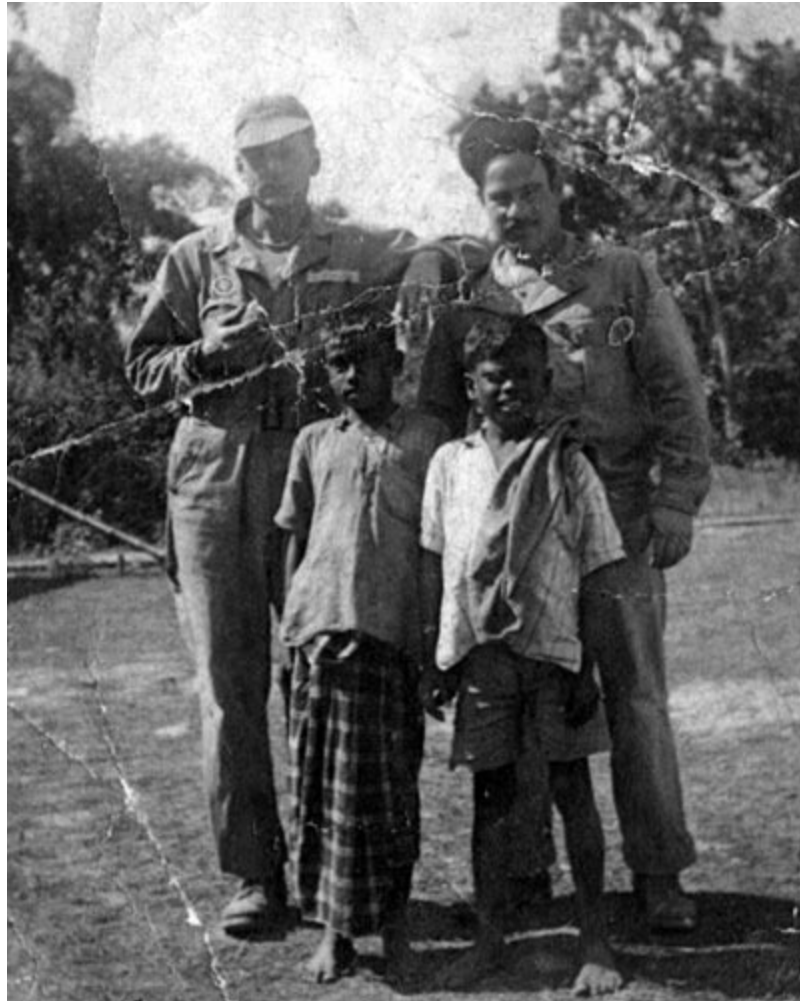


That looks like Walker on the right. His son said he believed he was in maintenance, and this garb sure seems to confirm that. No doubt Walker was the head enlisted man in maintenance.



The "Deer Hunters." The guy to the left looks like he's struttin'.





The 459th Twin Dragon Fighter squadron, Burma Banshees

The Men (continued and again)



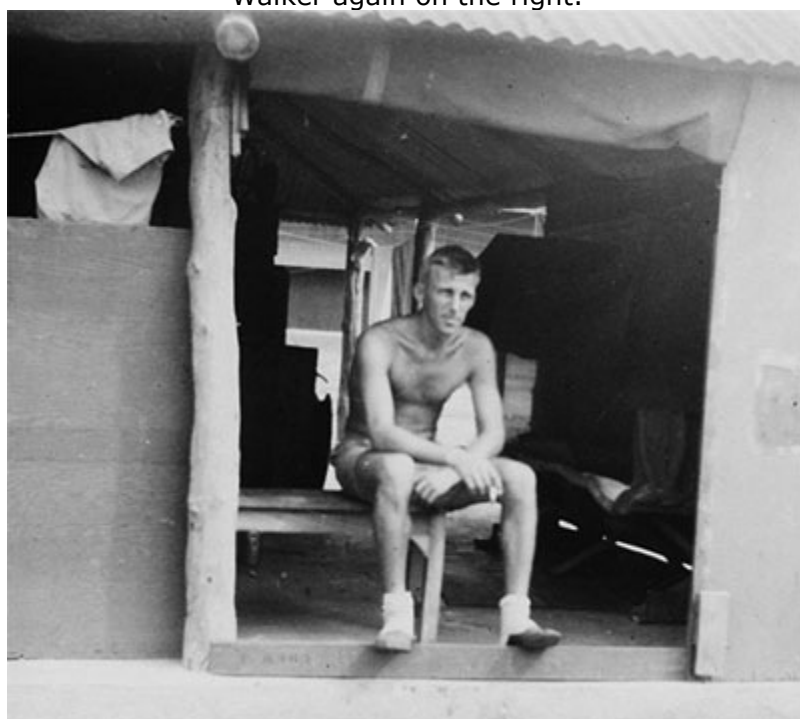
459th FS Tech Supply and the sergeant who works there.



That's Walker in the middle, so these must be his main guys.



Walker again on the right.





Dudes! You will recall Chittagong was close to the Bay of Bengal.



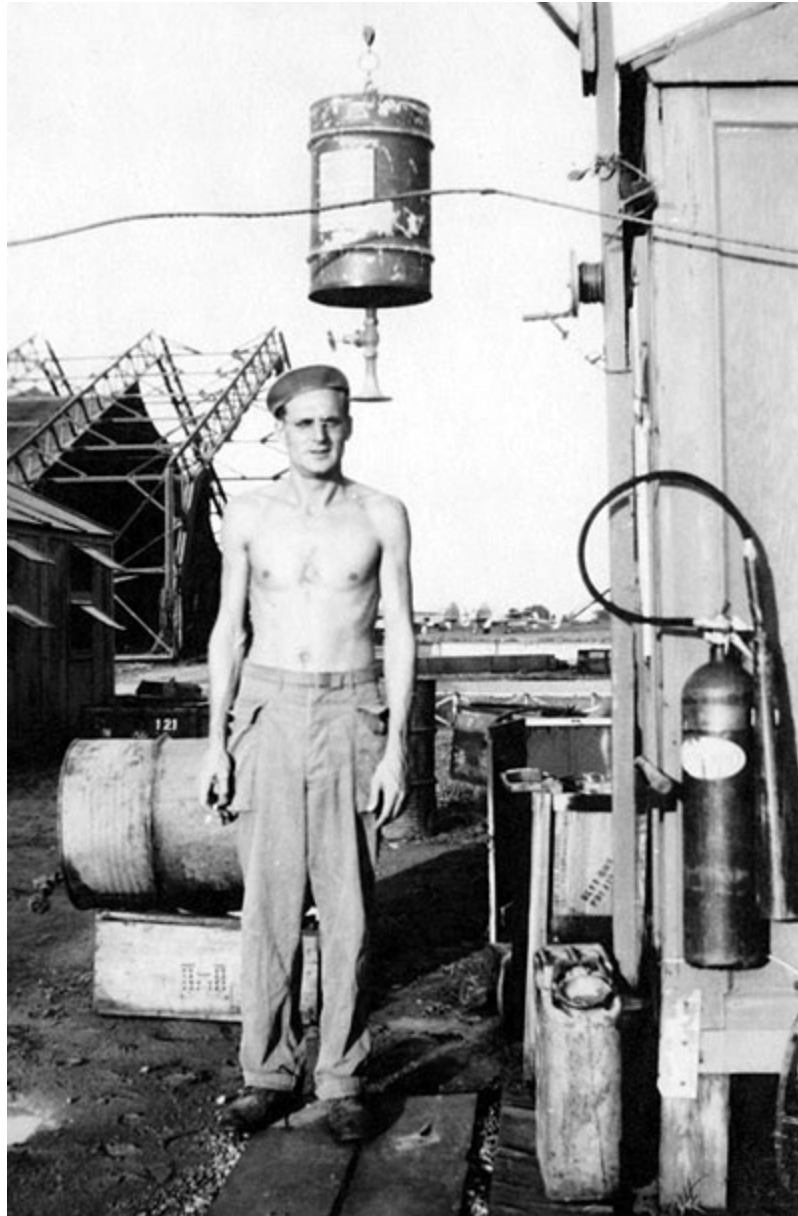
Believe this is MSgt Walker at his quarters. On the back of this photo, he noted, "No. 1, March 20, Friday, 1942."



This is an interesting shot. It looks like these guys are filling a P-38 extended fuel tank, located on the left.



Here's a closer look at the tank being filled.



This too is an interesting photo. There's old MSgt. Walker, looking thinner. But you can see what look like oil drums, petrol cans, and in the background, if you look carefully, parked P-38s.



This is, perhaps, the classic shot. War won. Let's go home! I love this photo. I want to close this page with what may or may not be two historic photos.



Lord Mountbatten reviewing the troops.



Mountbatten speaking.

The writing on the back of both photos say this:
 "Signing of Peace Treaty with Japan in Rangoon."
 The British reoccupied Rangoon on May 3, 1945. On August 28, 1945 Japanese military commanders came to Rangoon to negotiate the surrender of Japanese forces in Southeast Asia. The formal surrender occurred in Singapore on September 12, 1945, with Lord Mountbatten. I have seen photos of Mountbatten reading the order of the day on the steps of the Municipal Building in Singapore after the signing, and the above photo does not resemble that at all, so I am not sure where this took place.

The 459th Twin Dragon Fighter squadron, Burma Banshees

Japanese aircraft shot down



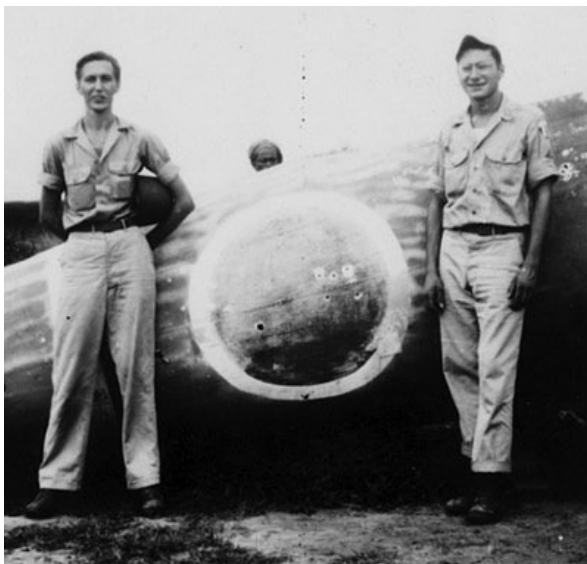
This appears to be a Japanese Mitsubishi Ki-30 which crash landed after being shot down. She was known to the Allies as "Ann."



This zooms in on the Americans around the aircraft.



A trophy.



You get a pretty good look at the bullet holes through the "rising sun." With some anxiety should I be wrong, I believe the person on the left is a woman, perhaps a nurse?